



December 8, 1999

Governor Gray Davis
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Dear Governor Davis:

On behalf of more than 300,000 members of the Environmental Defense Fund, 60,000 of whom live in California, we urge you to cooperate with the Department of the Interior's efforts to protect the beleaguered fisheries in the San Francisco Bay-Delta estuary and Central Valley. In particular, we urge you not to oppose Interior's plan to curtail Delta exports this week at its own federal facilities in order to reduce entrainment of spring run chinook salmon.

As you are aware, the spring run is listed as endangered under both the State and federal Endangered Species Acts. Real-time monitoring has detected the presence of spring run in the Delta. These fish are yearlings that have already survived a salmon's most uncertain first year and are the most likely to return as adults in two years. Failure to act now to protect these fish may ultimately result in more significant threats to users of both Central Valley Project and State Water Project supplies after a Biological Opinion is written under the federal act.

We believe that the dedication of water necessary to meet the federal obligations under Section 3406(b)(2) of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act is warranted and is very much in need by our anadromous and estuarine fisheries. DOI has already softened the accounting criteria for dedication of this water to the environment and, as a result, the corresponding reductions to CVP supplies will always be significantly less than 800 thousand acre-feet. Even if the CVP deliveries were reduced by the full amount, we note that it would be less than 6% of the 14 million acre-feet of agricultural water used annually in the San Joaquin and Tulare basins. Finally, both the agricultural as well as the municipal and industrial users of CVP water have access to other supplies, either through other agencies or through markets, and have made the most of these opportunities. The CVP water is simply their cheapest option.

Thank you for considering our views. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you or your staff in detail.

Sincerely,

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